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My dear John,

I have delayed writing to you until I had a chance of reporting to General Lemnitzer about my visit to Washington. Then the death of President Kennedy came as such a shattering blow that I have just had no incentive to collect my thoughts. I can appreciate how those of you who knew him and who worked for him must feel.

Thank you indeed most sincerely for arranging my visit to Washington and for giving me the opportunity of meeting Mr. Rusk and the members of the Ambassadorial Group. I must thank you also for your very kind hospitality.

I reported to General Lemnitzer on Thursday 21 November. That morning, I was present in his office when he saw the US Commandant in Berlin, General Polk, who explained his instructions to US Convoy Commanders. The main question asked by young Lieutenants and Captains was "what do we do in face of Soviets who adopt a threatening attitude at checkpoints on the autobahn?" General Polk was quite clear that "US soldiers are not to fire first" and even under the greatest provocation, and possibly in the case of the death of a US soldier, restraint is to be shown. General Polk stated that "we are not to start the next war", but he could not be more explicit because so much depends on the circumstances at the time. He went on to say that convoys were processed by two US Military Police officers. One who had been inclined to be somewhat officious in his attitude he had instructed to be more tactful; the other he had told to be a bit more energetic in his duties.

In the company of General Dulhose that afternoon, I spoke to General Lemnitzer on our meetings and conversations in Washington. General McConnell was present. I found General Lemnitzer in splendid form. You may have seen his signal ECCC 00329 of 19 November to JCS. There is no doubt that he has been anxious throughout the recent convoy incidents to leave the convoy business to be handled by military commanders in Germany and the Embassies in Bonn.

I raised with General Lemnitzer the question of passing information from LIVE OAK to Washington. I explained what I had told you about the action of the French, German and UK elements in passing information to respective Ministries of Defence and in the UK case, direct to the Foreign Office on some occasions. General Lemnitzer decreed that LIVE OAK should pass information to JCS, particularly concerning the French and United Kingdom but that we should sort out the procedure with General McConnell.

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/Yesterday

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Yesterday General Chapman discussed the subject at HQ EUCOM and we have agreed that US matters will normally be left to EUCOM to inform the National Military Command Centre, but any French or UK information will be passed by the LIVE OAK Operations Centre to the N.M.C.C. I have complete confidence in my Operations Centre Officers to get the information through correctly. I have since spoken on the phone to the Director J-3, General Unger, who welcomed the fact that I might on occasions ring him direct. Remembering your advice of "step by step" I do not propose to do anything else at present. The subject has been ventilated and I have had directions from General Lemnitzer. I see no reason why I should not now feel free to speak to you direct but I will not broadcast this fact.

I do appreciate very much all you did to make my trip so useful. I was particularly glad to meet Mr. Dean Rusk. Colonel Shaw, who is now at HQ BAOR, was telling me recently that when he was serving on a Planning Staff in India in 1943-44 he met Mr. Rusk who was acting as a Liaison Officer. He and two other officers, Worsely and Zvegintsov, who are still serving, had a very high opinion of Lieutenant Colonel Rusk.

On 15 November we had a valuable visit to Norfolk where Admiral Smith was most helpful. I came away most encouraged, feeling that the sailors were at last getting a move on. Now, it is up to the Ambassadorial Group to get the various papers approved as quickly as possible.

On the way back from Washington I called in to the Ministry of Defence, London and the Foreign Office. I found no indication of any doubts in people's minds on the question you asked me. In fact, at an "Ends of the Earth" dinner in London on 14 November when General Lemnitzer was the Guest Speaker, Admiral Earl Mountbatten made complimentary references to him before many distinguished people, including members of the Government and war time colleagues such as Field Marshal Alexander and Air Marshal Tedder. I know General Lemnitzer greatly enjoyed that occasion and was obviously delighted with the fine reception he was given. The British Ambassador in Bonn, Sir Frank Roberts, also spoke at the dinner.

Finally, I would like to emphasise again that I can give your question a firm "no". I have not found any evidence to support your suggestion and I am very glad to be able to write this. I find General Lemnitzer a very nice officer to serve. He is direct and he is straight and I am quite certain that any future harassment can be faced with confidence. Of course, I am very happy that I have established such good relations with General McConnell. His advice would be especially valuable if we are faced with air corridor problems.

Many thanks again for your very friendly welcome. Please let me know in good time if you can have a meal at my house in the country next month.

Best wishes to you and the members of your staff.
Yours sincerely,
Tommy Harris
As I have just learned that Mr. Rusk is in the
country, the question of his being invited to visit
would be possible if he were to visit here for a few
days. I am sure that you would be very welcome.
Mr. John C. Ausland,
Berlin Task Force, State Department,
Washington, D.C.

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